

A list of rules for strange trees, based on real world plantlife.



## Weird Trees

**Description:** Truth is often stranger than fiction, and there's nothing new under the sun. While our adventures in the fantastic worlds of DCC are full of strange encounters and unprecedented dangers, so are our own forests. The following trees are all based on real world plants (with research references for the curious), and in many cases I've only had to apply a *minor* poetic license to bring the odd greenery in line with the thematic environment of perilous fantasy.

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### The Scatterboom

*5<sup>th</sup> of the Paw, Year of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Minotaur*

*4<sup>th</sup> day after landfall*

*As we pressed deeper into the darkened jungle, our local guides became very agitated. They were clearly fearful of something nearby, but our interpreter - the useless elf we hired from Portmoor harbour - could only pick up scattered words from their odd chirping language.*

*Apparently the scaled savages were afraid of 'booming seeds' or something of the sort.*

*Obviously, we discounted their worry and pressed on: no civilized man can allow themselves to succumb to the fears plaguing lesser races such as the feathered lizardfolk found on the coasts of the Far South.*

*Unfortunately, our bravado proved to be the demise of a group of trailblazing sailors later that day. Apparently, some of the trees in this blasted thicket spread their seeds*

by disseminating explosive fruit! Who'd've known such a thing exists!

Reduce active sailor complement by 6 and ½, hire able men to replace the dead at the nearest convenience.

- Venk Halvoor, captain of the Zuiger

**Description:** The scatterboom is a tall evergreen, found growing in inland tropical forests, often among other trees. Its trunk is covered in long, sharp spines making it exceptionally difficult to climb (climbers must succeed in DC 14 Ref save per climb check rolled or suffer 1d6 piercing damage). The bark of the tree is dark brown and oily, its leaves are large and round, and the flowers found on the higher branches of the tree are a livid, crimson red. The tree can grow to up to 60 meters (~200') in height, and generally reaches maturity and starts to bear fruit at around a height 30 metres (~100').

Scatterboom fruit are roughly the size of a halfling's head, and explode in a shrapnel-blast of sharp seeds when impacting with the ground. The seeds are shaped like predator claws, and have a razor edge. They embed themselves in anything soft enough, and immediately begin to spread tendrils into whatever they've been planted into. If left alone the seed sprouts into a tiny but hardy sapling within a day of implantation.

**Dangers:** A mature scatterboom blooms and bears fruit intermittently through the year, forming a major danger to anyone moving in its vicinity. When passing a scatterboom, all unaware characters should make DC 5 Luck checks for each 10 metres (~30') traversed within 10 metres (~30') of a scatterboom. If multiple trees are present nearby increase the check DC by 5 per tree. If the travelers are aware of the scatterboom and its dangerous nature, this roll can be replaced with a suitable skill check. Failure indicates that a fruit falls from the tree for whatever reason. Pick a spot roughly at the center of the group of travelers, and randomize the point of impact using a d8 for direction (as 1 denoting north, 2 denoting north

east, and so on) and scattering the point of explosion d10'.

A scatterboom fruit produces a 15' (~4,5 m) diameter explosion causing 1d8 points of damage and forcing anyone within the area to roll a DC 15 Ref save. Failure indicates that 1d3 seeds have been embedded into the victim's flesh, causing an additional point of damage per seed. The carrier must then roll a DC 12 Fort save each hour or suffer an additional d3 damage as the seedling burrows its tendrils deeper into their flesh. After 24 hours the seed sprouts into a small sapling; after this point removing it causes 3d6 points of damage and the debilitating effect of the tendrils continues as before.

**Utility:** If somehow harvested, scatterboom fruit can obviously be used as makeshift weapons. Additionally, scatterboom flowers and fruitpulp can be used to create a caustic poison which causes debilitating pain unless a DC 14 Fort save is passed upon application; the pain causes -1d to all actions and reduces the victim's movement speed to 1/3 of normal for a duration of 1d8 turns.

**Real-world inspiration:** The sandbox tree (*Hura crepitans*). Read more beyond this [link](#).

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## Bilesour Tree

*Now, whatever you do, stay out of the east orchard! That side of the farm has gone all to shambles, after our Jontar 'ad that run-in with them gremlins from the marsh. The little buggers went an' cast some sorta spell on the appletrees there. Now the airs all prickly an' the fruit makes ya bleed! Even the goats can't stomach them apples...*

- Matron Moster Logborn, village of Erayo

**Description:** Superficially, the bilesour tree resembles an apple tree in many respects. Apart for its overall jaundiced colouring and its eerie propensity to not wilt even during the winter months, a casual observer might well mistake a bilesour to a particularly sickly variety of apple tree. The tree is in fact an invasive

species from the less reputable reaches of the Elflands, Anyone coming within 6 meters (~20') of a bilesour and is propagated in more mundane environs by tree must succeed a DC 5 Fort save or suffer a -2 mischievous fae-creatures, often as a form of penalty to all actions requiring sight due to irritation. vengeance to slights real or perceived.



Despite its unassuming appearance, the bilesour is venomous, poisonous and downright acrid to a fault. The tree produces potent pollen, which irritates both the eyes and the lungs of those unfortunate enough to come to contact with it. Additionally, its sap is caustic and the fruit it bears, though quite pleasant-tasting, usually causes those ingesting to choke as their throat swells shut. Indeed, many folktales accuse witches of tricking the innocent to consume the fruit with less than fortunate consequences.

**Dangers:** An untrained observer may easily mistake a bilesour tree for just another apple variety, especially if the tree has managed to infiltrate an otherwise unsullied orchard. Characters coming into contact with the plant should roll DC 20 perception checks to recognize the danger.

Anyone foolish enough to come within 1,5 m (~5') of a tree must further succeed in a DC 10 Fort save or be blinded due to the caustic pollen. Both of these afflictions last for 24 hours from contamination.

Furthermore, anyone coming to contact with the tree suffers 1d3 points of acid damage, which is increased to 2d3 should they come into contact with the sap. Additionally, the sap is sticky, requiring copious amounts of water to be cleared off, and extremely caustic, capable of eating through soft materials and even able to corrode base metals coming into contact with it.

Finally, eating a bilesour fruit is extremely foolish. While the taste itself is rather enjoyable, and the fruit is indeed said to be a delicacy of some repute in the Elflands, mundane consumers must roll a DC 18 Fort save: failure indicates that they simply choke to death if not successfully healed within a number of rounds equal to their Stamina; and even successful consumers suffer 3d3 points of damage immediately, and severe indigestion and gastric symptoms for the following week.

**Utility:** Bilesour fruit resemble sickly apples, and it may conceivably be possible to trick someone into eating them: indeed, this is reputedly a favoured method of murder among the witches and the hags plaguing the countryside. Unfortunately the caustic nature of the tree's sap makes it entirely useless as poison, since it likely destroys the arrow or blade used to deliver it. However, the wood from the bilesour tree retains some of its magical origins even when cut down, and can be used as part of various rituals involving poisons or the creation of wicked and cruel weaponry - should someone be able to cut a bilesour down and survive, that is.

**Real-world inspiration:** The manchineel tree (*Hippomane mancinella*). Read more beyond this [link](#).

## Murderbush

*Didja 'ear what 'appened to Sly Galbraith? 'E's dead! 'Is cronies say that ol' Galbraith climbed into the new baron's garden, all sneaky an' sly like - ya know 'ow Galbraith does, right? See, 'e wuz a fter them there golds an' riches that pale bastard brought from the southlands.*

*So, Gal climbs in an' tells 'is crew ta wait outside wif the getaway 'orses, he'll be back in a 'alf a watch or so. Only 'e comes tumblin' back over a fter barely a wink 'ad passed! Shoutin' an' screamin' like 'e wuz bein' ate alive! 'Is cronies say that he wuz screamin' about "an evil, slitherin' bush that stings" a fore 'e actually slit 'is own throat, all wild from pain, like.*

*I dunno. I call bulldung on that. Ain't no bush sting a man that bad. I think they's just got tired of all 'is braggin' an' goin'-on an snuffed 'im.*

*Any'ow, they dinnae bring back no loot, so I figger we go do a little shoppin' at the baron's stores soon... You game?*

*- last known account of Kelp Longfinger, sneak-thief*

**Description:** The murderbush, also known as the suicide vine, the death-leaf and the *nazazu-nazazu* (roughly meaning 'kill me - kill me' in the original gnomish) is actually two symbiotic plants, one of which is partially sentient and both of which are extremely dangerous. The tree itself is a bushy, wide tree, usually growing to a maximum height of 6 meters (~20'), with low-hanging and far reaching branches. The soft bark and the large, rounded leaves of the tree are covered in long, translucent hairs, much like those of a nettle. These hairs contain a potent neurotoxin, capable of causing extreme, long-lasting pain to anyone coming to contact with them. The tree and its branches are always covered in a vine-like growth of thin tendrils. The vine portion of the murderbush is actually moderately sentient, and capable of slight independent movement. Its method of predation involves attempting to strike nearby creatures with the branches of the parent tree, often killing them on the spot so that they may be

consumed and processed into nutrients for both the vine and the parent plant.

It is said that the murderbush blooms only under special conditions brought about by rites only known to long dead, antediluvian cults. Its fruit is said to be magnificent, and poisonous enough to kill gods.

**Dangers:** The main danger of the murderbush is obviously in the stinging hairs on its bark and leaves. Anyone coming to skin-contact with the plant must roll a DC 14 Fort save: success indicates that they suffer 2d4 points of damage and are at -1d to all rolls due to pain for a duration of 1d7 days; failure increases the damage to 2d8 points and the pain-penalty to -2d for 3d12 months. The pain is absolutely excruciating, and healing it requires 4 dice from a cleric's lay on hands.

A secondary, although no less threatening danger is the vine. It attempts to use the branches of the tree to attack anyone near it. There is a 50% chance each round that the vine makes an attack, which it rolls at +2 to hit, which increases to a +12 should the target be near the tree.

Note that it is possible to shield oneself from the hairs of the tree: they are incapable of penetrating cured hides or leather, although any such protections must cover all of the wearer's skin to be safe enough for comfort.

**Utility:** The murderbush has little utility beyond perimeter defense. The murderbush propagates itself by expanding its roots and growing new trunks in its vicinity. Groves of murderbush expand in a ringlike fashion, with the older trees at the middle often perishing due to the lack of nutrient rich prey at the middle of the growth. Thus, murderbush groves are often utilized as a form of natural protection by creatures capable of avoiding their sting either by flying over the trees or by tunneling under them.

**Real-world inspiration:** The stinging tree (*Dendrocnide moroides* and its relatives). Read more about it [here](#).

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## The Dragonhome Tree

*High in top of the dragonhome tree,  
Sleeps a little dragon, a dragon like thee  
When the wind blows the dragon will fly  
Sleep little lordling, now don't you cry*

*- a lullaby sung to Rilvac I, the New King*

**Description:** While scholars all over the world still argue the origin of dragons and drakes, a children's tale from the far, eastern lands of the Low Plains credit their emergence to the dragonhome tree. Indeed, these tall, towering stocks are known to be home to a species of clever, colourful drakes closely resembling miniature dragons. The tree is usually found growing alone on the high tabletop peaks common to the region, and it is said that it only propagates through the "flight of dragons", a rare event when the nesting drakes set out to find a new habitat. The tree seems to be a relation to the palm, exhibiting an umbrella-like crown atop a singular towering trunk.

It is claimed that the tree bleeds when cut, and that the blood of the dragonhome tree holds many mystical qualities. Some soothsayers even go as far as to say that it is a panacea, capable of curing all ailments. Collecting the sap is obviously no small task, as the tree grows atop high, nigh unreachable plateaus and is roost to intelligent small dragonlings. Additionally the bark of the tree itself is almost impenetrable everywhere except near the stems of the leaves and the tree itself can reach heights of up to 80 meters (~260).

**Dangers:** While finding and accessing a dragonhome tree is surely a perilous task suitable only for the hardest of adventurers, the tree itself is not dangerous. The risks posed by such an endeavour are presented by the climb - both to reach the tree and to reach its top - and the little dragons residing among its crown.

A single dragonhome tree is usually home to a colony consisting of 20-50 dragonlings of varying temperament and disturbing them usually proves fatal. The dragonlings obviously hunt on the nearby plains as well, and the locals consider them a good luck omen, as they keep other pests and monsters in check.

**Tree Dragonlings:** *Init:* +4; *Atk:* bite +4 melee (1d8) or breath weapon (see SP); *AC:* 14; *HD:* 2d6; *MV:* 20' or fly 40'; *Act:* 1d20; *SP:* infravision 60'; breath weapon based on colour, 10'x5' cone, determine type using table in DCC rulebook (Table III, page 407); *SV:* Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +3; *AL:* varies.

**Utility:** Contrary to the usual nature of myth and legend, the blood red sap of the dragonhome tree actually is a panacea to most if not all mundane ailments, and a potent magical reagent on its own right. In fact, recipes referring to 'dragonblood' often actually call for the sap of the dragonhome tree and not the sanguine liquids of actual dragons. The author leaves further effects of the sap to the imagination of the Judge.

**Real-world inspiration:** The dragon blood tree (*Dracaena cinnabari*) and the bloodwood tree (*Corymbia opaca*). Read more about them [here](#) and [here](#).

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## Knifebelly Tree

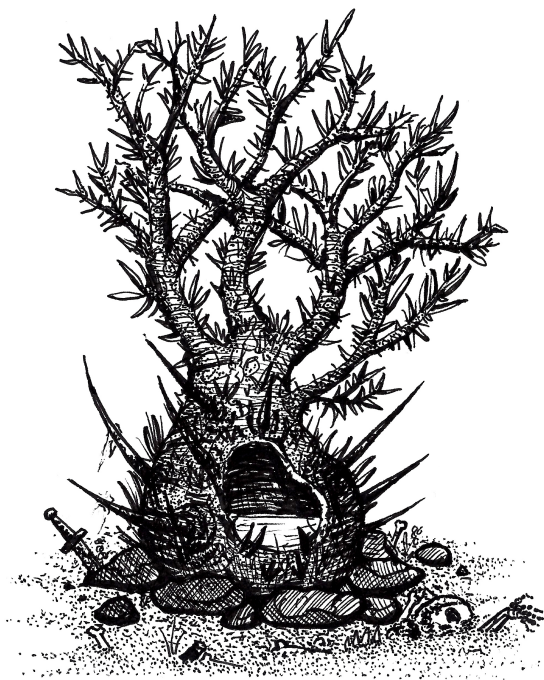
*Whatever else is said about the orcs of the Screaming Sands desert, their tribes are excellent at survival in the harsh climate and unforgiving terrain. The orcs are able to survive and even thrive where even the local nomads fear to tread, and are somehow capable of drawing sustenance from plants and creatures other creatures must simply avoid due to their lethality.*

*One of these orcish secrets is tapping the knifebelly tree: a bottle-shaped plant covered in sharp, knife-like protrusions coated in psychoactive venom. These defenses protect the tree's hollow trunk, which contains a volume of water slowly siphoned from the dry desert air. The process*

of accessing said reservoir is a carefully guarded secret of the orcish trail-scouts.

- "An Account of the Eastern Deserts" by Kastor Harsk

**Description:** The knifebelly tree is endemic to the harsh deserts of the eastern desert and only seems to grow in habitats where other flora is scarce or non-existent. The squat, low tree only grows to up to 6 meters (~20') in height, and is shaped like a wide-bellied bottle or decanter. The exterior of the tree is entirely covered by knife-shaped, sharp spines, which in turn contain a powerful psychoactive venom. The venom causes a powerful psychotic rage-state when introduced to the system of most living creatures. All of this has evolved in the effort to protect the valuable prize inside the tree's hollow belly: clean, drinkable water.



The process of extracting water from a knifebelly tree usually causes the creature attempting it to impale themselves on the spines of the tree in a violent state of panicked rage. Even carefully removing the spines of the tree does not seem to prevent the venom from taking effect, as incorrectly breaching the trunk contaminates the water inside with the venom. The secret of tapping a knifebelly tree is known only to the

local orcish tribes. In fact, the orcs have been known to cultivate the tree near and in their abodes as it provides a facile source of drinkable water in the harsh environment.

**Dangers:** The spines of the knifebelly tree cause 1d6 points of damage if the tree is carelessly handled. Anyone taking damage from the tree must succeed in a DC 25 Fort save or succumb to a blind, bestial rage: enraged individuals experience potent transformative hallucinations, and attack anything in their vicinity with their bare hands, feet and even teeth: those few who have survived the experience claim that they momentarily turned into great, primal beasts and felt that everything around them was a threat, causing them to lash out. The rage-state persists for 1d6 turns.

Incorrectly tapping the tree causes the venom to enter the reservoir of water within the tree and consuming the contaminated water has the venomous effects described above. Contrary to popular belief there is no correct way to tap a knifebelly tree. The reason the orcs are able to use the tree for sustenance is a racial immunity to its venom: an orc is always full of rage and confident in its own power against anything in its environment, so the hallucinogenic effect of the plant has no effect on their meager psyche.

**Utility:** Whilst extricating the water from inside the knifebelly tree unavoidably causes it to become poisoned, purifying it is certainly possible. Advanced filtration methods and magic obviously work, but time seems to be the most useful tool here, as the venom of the knifebelly tree loses potency within a week of being tapped. Unfortunately, time is often a luxury desert travelers cannot afford, and many a thirsty soul has perished to the tree's insidious effects. Similarly, this expiration date makes the venom of the knifebelly tree fairly useless to would-be assassins and other users of toxic substances as the tree is usually only found in areas very distant from civilization.

**Real-world inspiration:** The bottle tree (*Pachypodium lealii* and its relatives). Read more about it beyond this [link](#).